

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

DEC 07 2009

Baptists mark half-century in Vietnam

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (BP)— Shortly before the fall of Saigon at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, Le Quoc Chanh, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), came with his wife and young son to the home of missionary Sam James.

Chanh told James that he and his family had the opportunity to leave the war-ravaged country on a boat, but weren't sure what to do. They were going to spend the weekend praying. James, whose wife and children had already evacuated, pledged to join the Chanh's in prayer.

"Monday morning, they came back to my house," James recalled. "Pastor Chanh told me they had decided to stay in Vietnam. He said that God had given him a flock to pastor, and he could not abandon his sheep."

Both men knew the enormity of this decision. Many churches closed their doors as turmoil and uncertainty enveloped the country. Grace Church was the only church that remained open and held services in the early days of the new Vietnamese government.

Today Grace Church still meets at its original location, the site in mid-November for services celebrating 50 years of Baptist work in Vietnam. Vietnamese Baptists, former missionaries, and visitors from the United States and Cambodia gathered for worship, preaching and celebration.

Nearly 725 people, including a number of government officials, attended the Nov. 15 service. Pastor Chanh was seated on the front pew.

Although elderly and in poor health, Chanh retains the title of senior pastor. He stood briefly to accept a plaque from former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) presi-



RETURN TO WORSHIP — C'Anne Wofford climbs the steps of Grace Baptist Church in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, which was formerly known Saigon when the city was the capital of the Republic of South Vietnam. Wofford worshipped in the church nearly 30 years ago as a missionary kid. She returned in November with friends and family to celebrate 50 years of Baptist work in the communist country. (BP photo)

dent and Vietnam War combat veteran Bobby Welch, who represented the SBC and was keynote speaker for the morning service.

Chanh's son Huy is the associate pastor and has assumed many of the day-to-day responsibilities of the pastorate. Huy, who also serves as executive secretary of the Vietnam Baptist Convention, was the main organizer of the celebration.

Through Chanh's and Huy's leadership, the Vietnam Baptist Convention was organized in 2008 and officially recognized by the Vietnamese government to carry out its work among the country's nearly 87 million people. The convention's primary objectives are to start new churches, disciple believers, train workers, develop leaders, publish materials, and meet human needs in the name of Jesus.

Baptist work in Vietnam began in 1959 when Herman and Dottie Hayes, the first Southern Baptist workers to the country, arrived in Saigon. Over the next few years, missionary families continued to respond to the call to work in Vietnam, and by 1975 the mission force had grown to nearly 40 families scattered throughout the south and central areas.

"We were all young when we went to Vietnam," recalled Rachel James, Sam's wife. "It was new work. We were in our 30s with small children. We all grew up together. We were family."

Although the majority of their years in Vietnam were

fraught with bombings, escalating tensions, and finally all-out war, none of the former missionaries focused on those aspects during the celebration. Instead, when asked during a panel discussion about their struggles and obstacles, they recounted funny stories of language barriers and cultural faux pas.

They also recalled the heartbreak of leaving a people and a country they had come to love.

Texan Celia Moore, who turned 80 in June, and her daughter C'Anne Wofford flew from the United States to attend the services. Wofford was 12 years old when she left Vietnam with her mother. Her father Peyton Moore left the country with James and another missionary a few days later.

"Our first night in Hong Kong, my daughter asked me, 'Why did we have to leave our country?'" Celia recalled. "I had no answer for her then."

Over the years, however, the Moores saw God's leadership as they found opportunities to work with Vietnamese living in the United States. The children, now in their 40s, remember the fun times — digging tunnels in the backyard, climbing onto the roof to pick fruit, and even smuggling a stray cat onto an Air Vietnam flight. They remember Vietnam as home.

C'Anne Wofford smiled as she sipped coconut milk straight from a coconut. "Everybody said, 'Oh it's going to be so different,' but I was here as a child. For me, it's more of a sensory thing," she said. "It's not the size of the buildings. It's the smells and sounds and feel of the place that I remember."



SWEET SMELLS — Fifty years after Southern Baptists began ministry in Vietnam, stands with an abundance of fruit, clothing, coffee, and trinkets line the streets of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The markets in the capitol of the former Republic of South Vietnam, then known as Saigon, are filled with the smell of durian and mangosteen (types of fruit), beef, and fish. (BP photo)



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address changes to: The Editor,
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VOLUME 133 • NUMBER 48

(ISSN 0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$10.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plan available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.

The Heavenly Book Visitor

Charlotte Diggs Moon was born into the rarified Virginia aristocracy at her family's Albemarle County estate on December 17, 1840. She died a pauper's death 72 years later, thousands of miles from home and a lifetime away from her privileged early life.

Those are the cold, hard textbook facts. We all have a beginning and an end on this earth, but it's what we do in between that counts for eternity. "Lottie," as she came to be known, understood that fact.

In 1858, God moved in Lottie's life and she accepted Christ as Lord while attending the First Baptist Church in Charlottesville, Va. God moved again in her life in 1873, when she requested and against all odds received her missionary appointment from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board). She was one of the first single women chosen for Southern Baptist missionary service.

Lottie set sail for China in September of that year and by December had settled in the northern town of Tengchow, where she

lived for the next 40 years. She devoted herself to evangelistic work among the women and children of the surrounding area, telling all who would listen about the "true God," giving away books, and teaching those who couldn't read the books.

Lottie was rejected many times and earned the nickname of "Devil Old Woman," but her persistence never flagged. She wrote to friends in the United States, "How I wish I had a thousand lives that I might give them to the women of China!"

Lottie's love for the Bible and for the Chinese people became legendary in the villages around Tengchow, and opposition to her work eventually faded. Then one day as she moved among the people with her Bible, she heard someone refer to her as the "Heavenly Book Visitor." The name quickly stuck with villagers.

In Lottie's day China suffered almost constant internal turmoil, with outside powers also attempting to exert their influence. Still, Lottie fervently continued her work through the chaos.

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 ignited famine that soon spread through the Chinese countryside and foreshadowed fateful events to come in Lottie's life. Desperate to help the starving people around whom God has called her to

build her life, Lottie began to withdraw her personal life savings and use the money to feed the hungry.

When that money ran out, she used virtually all her meager salary to buy food for others — often failing to retain enough food for herself. She collapsed five days before her seventy-second birthday, her health broken and her 4'11" frame nearly decimated. Years of personal sacrifice had taken its toll.

Lottie died of starvation on Christmas Eve, 1912, in the harbor of Kobe, Japan, aboard a ship that was taking her home to America. The world took little note of her life and death, but she changed Southern Baptists and China forever.

Many sad events have transpired in Lottie's China since she came home — some of which involved Southern Baptists — but God will yet prevail in that nation of soft-spoken, humble people.

A marble gravestone in a small Virginia cemetery carries Lottie's name, as does the greatest international missions offering in all of Christendom. Also on that gravestone is the simple phrase, "Faithful unto death."

God permit that those words, bought at so great a price by the Heavenly Book Visitor, should also mark the Christian service of each one of us.

WHO'S WHOSE MISSING? MISSION?

WEEK OF PRAYER
FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS
AND INTERNATIONAL MISSION STUDY
NOV. 29 - DEC. 6, 2009

First Person: Lottie spirit alive and well in Mississippi

By Junior Davis, pastor
Williamsville Church, Kosciusko

The spirit of Lottie Moon is alive and well in Mississippi. Lottie, an early Southern Baptist missionary to China, was known for unselfish giving of not only herself, but also her material possessions. Such sacrifices led to her death from starvation because she gave her meager foods supplies to the Chinese people during famine.

Now you can add one more name to her legacy.

Laverne Pickle was a long-time member of Williamsville Church, Kosciusko, who went home to be with Jesus in 2008. Over the years, every Wednesday night she would humbly stand, read the names of missionaries that had birth-

days, and pray for them. Since her death, we learned she not only prayed for missionaries but put action to her prayers.

Many missionaries of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention have now recounted how many letters of encouragement she sent

them while they were on the mission field. These letters would arrive during a time of hardship and would be a source of great comfort and encouragement.



Laverne Pickle

All mission efforts are important to us, but the 2008 Lottie Moon Offering for International Missions will be one of the more memorable at Williamsville Church. With the entire family in our service, Laverne Pickle's son James read aloud her last will and testament. She stated

in her own handwriting that if any money was left in her account upon her death, she wanted to donate it to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Living on a modest income her entire life, Mrs. Pickle left \$840.00 to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

It's not the amount of money that touched so many in our service that day. It was the spirit of her unselfish giving. Laverne Pickle was still giving to the Lord's work even in her death.

God used her generosity to lead us to receive one of the largest Lottie Moon offerings we had ever taken. Many were in tears as we left the service, knowing Lottie's spirit of giving is alive and well.

I wonder how many more Laverne Pickles were born at Williamsville Church that day. Thank you, Laverne Pickle, for still putting pieces in the puzzle. The legacy of Lottie Moon lives on.

Welch recalls impact of Vietnam on his life

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (BP) — "For 43 years, there hasn't been a day in my life that I haven't thought about Vietnam," Bobby Welch told a crowd of nearly 725 Vietnamese believers, former missionaries, and government officials celebrating 50 years of Baptist work in Vietnam.

Welch, strategist for global evangelical relations for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee, attended the Nov. 15 celebration at Grace Baptist Church in Ho Chi Minh City and delivered the keynote address during the worship service.

Ho Chi Minh City was previously known as Saigon when the city served as the capital of

the former Republic of South Vietnam.

Speaking on the theme, Walking with Christ: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, Welch recalled his visit to Vietnam in 2005 when he was president of the SBC. He also touched on the time he spent in Vietnam in the 1960s as a soldier in the U.S. Army.

Welch recounted his story of being shot at point-blank range on a jungle trail by a Viet Cong soldier. Thinking he would surely die, Welch prayed a simple prayer and miraculously survived his life-threatening injuries. That experience led him to recommit his life to Christ and embark on a life of service to God.

"I have often told my wife that if I could find that soldier who shot me, I would bring him to my house, give him the best room, feed him the best meal, and embrace him like a brother because of how God used him to change my life," Welch told the crowd.

In his role with the SBC Executive Committee, Welch is responsible for building global



BAPTISTS TOGETHER — Bobby Welch (right) speaks with Le Quoc Chanh (center), the first Vietnamese believer from Baptist ministry in the country, as former missionary to Vietnam Sam James translates. (BP photo)

relationships among Baptist leaders and other evangelicals.

Welch applauded steps by the government of Vietnam to provide more religious freedom. In January 2008, the government officially recognized the Vietnam Baptist Convention

and its work across the country.

"I was in Vietnam yesterday," said Welch of his visits to the country. "I am here walking with you in Christ today, and if you will allow us, we will be here walking with you tomorrow."

WHO'S WHO'S MISSING? MISSION?

LOTTE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING

National Goal: \$15.5 million

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Uzbekistan Baptist leaders issued crushing fines

TASHKENT, Uzbekistan (BP) — On the basis of allegedly fabricated evidence, a court in Uzbekistan has effectively removed three leaders of the country's Baptist Union on charges of tax evasion and illegally teaching religion to children.

Pavel Peichev, head of Uzbekistan's Baptist union, Yelena Kurbatova, the union's accountant, and Dmitri Pitirimov, director of the Joy Baptist Children's Camp, each were fined the equivalent of 260 times the monthly minimum wage and were banned from all administrative and financial activity for three years, according to the Forum 18 news service.

The court also ruled the Baptist Union will have to pay 107 months in unpaid taxes on alleged profit from children's camp operations.

The children's camp is held on recreational property owned by the Baptist Union for their adult members and their children. Peichev testified during an Oct. 6 hearing that not only did the camp not make a profit that could be taxed, but the Baptists spent more money on each camp participant than was paid in fees.

The three were convicted even though some of the parents involved denied their children were forced to listen to religious teaching. Pitirimov told Forum 18. Parents testified they had filed no complaints about the

camp and that no one harmed their children materially, physically, or morally.

They also told the court that no religious rituals were performed with their children during the camp, no Baptist had suggested their children change religion while at the camp, and no one had suggested children attend Baptist churches after the camp. One parent said she had written her statement as it was dictated to her by officials from the prosecutor's office — and that she had signed the record of her interrogation even though it was written in Russian, which she does not speak.

"Despite the fact that it was proven in the court the whole case was fabricated, the judge still went ahead and made a decision against us," Pitirimov told Forum 18. "As Jesus says in the Gospels, 'I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.' One can only imagine what kind of further attacks may come from the authorities."

The trio intend to appeal the court's decision, which was announced Oct. 29.

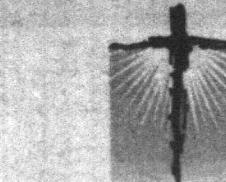
The verdict illustrates a broad climate of government persecution against religious freedom in Uzbekistan that affects not only evangelical Christians but also Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'is, and even Muslims. Forum 18 reported the country's Justice Ministry held a seminar Aug. 4 that compared the activity of religious

groups to human trafficking and religious extremism.

Sharing one's religious beliefs with others is a crime in Uzbekistan.

Newspapers and websites publish alarmist articles against missionary activity, and authorities have been rebroadcasting TV films encouraging intolerance and attacking religious minorities as well as freedom of religion or belief, Forum 18 said. In October, an article in the Chirchik newspaper alleged, without giving concrete examples, that Jehovah's Witnesses converts are stripped of homes and money. An Uzbek state television special first shown in November 2006 claims Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses turn people into zombies and then drive them to psychiatric hospitals.

In June 2008, Abe David Gurevich, the Russian-born head of the country's Jewish community who had worked in Uzbekistan since 1990, was forced to leave Uzbekistan after the Justice Ministry refused to renew work visas for Gurevich and his wife Malka. Uzbekistan's prisons also house prisoners of conscience such as Dmitry Shestakov, a Pentecostal pastor who is serving a four-year sentence, and three Jehovah's Witnesses.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

Looking back

10 years ago

A national "Celebrate Jesus 2000" advertising campaign Oct. 4-31 resulted in an unprecedented 43,300 calls to a national toll-free response number, with 18,000 requests for a copy of the "Jesus" video and 203 making immediate professions of faith.

20 years ago

The widow of Mississippi Baptist layman Owen Cooper, and Gene Triggs, chairman of the Agricultural Mission Foundation, jointly announce the establishment of the Owen Cooper Foundation to provide endowment for the support of agricultural missions around the world.

30 years ago

The 38th annual session of the Mississippi Baptist Student Convention ends with 102 students coming forward volunteering for mission service following an address by Baker James Cauthen, executive secretary, Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

DECEMBER 3, 2009

VOL. 133

NO. 48



YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004

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PKV ZA OZPO NAPLAOZ
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EPOZANAOZ TNHYO
HKOM SYTA AOANKPS:
OZPO RMOZ ZA OZPO
QMFAOZ PKV ZA OZPO
NAPLAOZ UPC
NAXMYIA OMEAQZAN.

XMZK TMHN: OZYNOC-
QYD

Clue: N = R

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Four: Twenty

BUSY BEING BUSY

I was on my way somewhere with the radio tuned to a Christian station when one of those little one minute or so devotional thoughts came on, and it just so happened to be Jill Briscoe. She was having a conversation with the Lord during her quiet time. He wanted to know where she had been. She explained that she lived in such a hurried world that she had not had time to visit with Him. She had been so busy being busy that she missed the opportunity to be blessed.

I am not sure that I know of anyone who does not feel the drain, strain, and even the pain of this time of the year as we are so busy being busy. Probably some, if not many, of the things that we are doing and places that we are going, if push came to shove, we could do without. Since we do not feel that we do not have sufficient reason not to go, not to do, or not to buy, we just press on in the fog and rain clouds of busyness. While the busyness of life may manifest itself more at this time of year than at any other, it is an all-year event for most of us.

Why is that? What creates that in so many of us? Well, for one thing, many of us want to be the best we can be and to do it all. We do not want to be



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

lazy, to give any remote hint of being uncommitted whether it is to a job, the church, a sports team, to family, or neighbors. We constantly hear the message from some teacher, preacher, motivational speaker, parent, or even a musician singing a tune that sticks with us and forces us to climb every mountain, ford every stream, spread your wings, and fly. Always stay busy! If we are not, we feel as though we are doing something sinister or evil and we must then live with the struggle of guilt and maybe depression.

Just being busy is not a virtue, while pausing to rest and recuperate is not a sin. Jesus lived in perfect balance and found absolute harmony in working hard, going long hours, and then finding rest and relaxation. There were moments that He had to be in the midst of everything and all of the swirl of life and controversy. There were other times when He had to get away from it all. He was perfection and was able to keep it in perfect balance.

A second reason why we stay so busy being busy is that many of us try to do all that anybody ever wants us to do. I have had people tell me that I did not have the word, "NO," in my vocabulary. That is really not true because I do say no to some engagements, but more often than not it is because I already have something else scheduled or it is totally impossible for me to get to where I am being asked to go. I want to be a servant of the Lord and I want to be a servant to others, but sometimes we say yes instead of no only because we do not want to struggle with the consequences of saying no.

How do you go about determining when you should say yes and when you should say no? There is not a simple answer. One thing that I have become aware of through the years is that oftentimes people want me to rearrange my schedule to fit their needs and they are totally unwilling to rearrange their schedule to fit my scheduling needs. Sometimes when I struggle with that kind of thinking, I am able to say, "I am sorry, but I just cannot do it." The consequences of saying no can be unpleasant, for

when you do not do what people want you to do they can let you know of their anger, deep disappointment, or degraded evaluation of you. Occasionally, they can be downright rude and sometimes even mean. Still, there are times that the right thing to do is to say no.

My final thought has to do with trying to find that approach to life that is busy enough to be fulfilling and not so busy that it just crushes you. It is the effort to seek sensitivity and to know the Lord's yes, no, or later in your life. If you can find that and keep that in perspective day by day, you can live with the yeses of life even if it extends you, stretches you, and calls for the deep resources that only God can provide in your life. You can live with the consequences of whatever may come in saying no. If the Lord does provide a maybe or a later, you can deal with them also at the proper time and in another way.

My prayer and hope for you is that you will be able to figure this out a whole lot better than I have and walk in the wonder and daily delight of following the Father like Jesus did. I would encourage you not to try to make this a New Year's resolution but rather ask the Lord to help you implement His time plan for you just for today.

Let us try it today, and then we will give it a renewed effort tomorrow.

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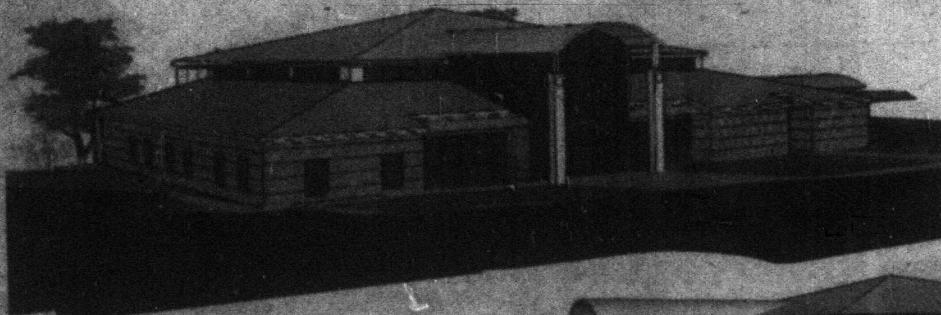
Matthew 10:27 NAS

December 3, 2009

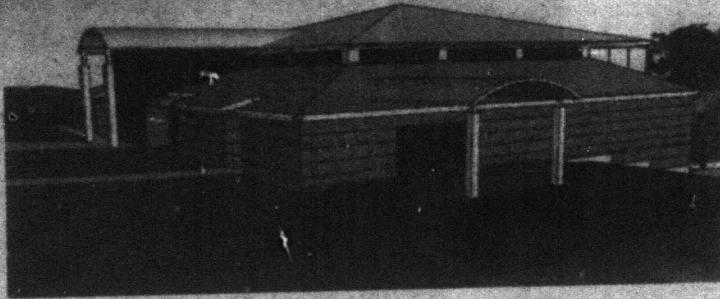
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Side view

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European Peoples

2/ 8/ 08
MISS GABI AEGERTER
Parents: John & Louann
NAMB - Nevada

2/ 12/ 03
MISS REBEKAH J. SCHMITZ
Parents: Burton & Suzanne
Sub-Saharan African Peoples

2/ 16/ 01
MR. HADDON BLEDSOE
Parents: David & Laurie
American Peoples

2/ 24/ 00
MR. NATHAN PEACOCK
Parents: Kevin & Brenda
European Peoples

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: Child's name, Parent's name, MBCB wMu MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205. PLEASE NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together, cards do not have to be sent individually to the wMu.



**PREACHER:
JOHN BISAGNO**

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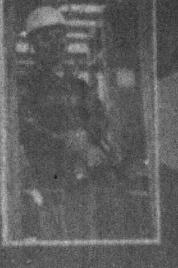
Clayton Jordan
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Deacon Ministry EMPHASIS 2010



SATISFIES



WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT YOU?
AND EARTH HAS NOTHING I DESIRE BESIDES YOU.

PSALM 73:25



DANNY LANIER



SOULSTICE



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2010 Baptist Doctrine Study



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Preview Study and Brunch

Wayne VanHorn

Dean, School of
Christian Studies
Mississippi College

MONDAY, JANUARY 18

Lauderdale Baptist Association Office
Marion, Miss.

MONDAY, JANUARY 25

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Course Book

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Christmas is... JESUS!

Shi Weihan was sentenced to three years in a Chinese prison for printing Bibles to give away. Pray that God's Word spreads.

Luis, 18, spends his school vacation trekking into guerrilla territory, sharing the good news in Colombia. Pray for young evangelists.

Jiang Yao was kicked out of her state-sponsored church in China for attending a Christian conference. Pray for a church family.

Pray for churches in war-torn areas to be instruments of God's love and peace to those who are in need. Pray for their distribution of clothes, food, and education for orphans and widows.

DEACON EMPHASIS WEEK, 3rd-9th (P/LD)

Muslim extremists raided a Christian village in Mindanao, Philippines, leaving hundreds homeless. Pray for their strength.

Pray for the women and men in our churches to reach out to the youth and mentor them in the ways of the Lord. Pray for boldness to do this, even though it might feel uncomfortable at the beginning.

Columbian guerrillas shot Marcella, Lydia and Jeffrey's parents because they shared Jesus with others. Pray for their safety.

Pray for a team from Good Hope Baptist Church in Purvis as they travel to Kenya, December 13-21, to do research and plan a strategy for mission involvement in that country.

Pray for individuals and families in our churches to seek a specific time of reflection on the true meaning of Christmas.

Youth Evangelism Challenge, Mississippi College, Clinton, 28th-29th. Pray for God to give the youth a vision to reach their generation with the gospel.

Pray for single parents seeking to raise their children in Christ and in the church. Pray for church members to be sensitive to their needs and the needs of their children.

Pray that church leaders would not fall into the trap of assuming all of their church members have made a personal decision for Christ. Pray that they will know how to humbly share with their church members.

The Eritrean government imprisons Christians in metal containers, denying them food and medical care. Pray for their safety.

Pray for over 80 students and adults participating in Christmas in China, December 14-January 1. Pray for a safe journey and the opportunity to share the true meaning of Christmas.

Mothers are trying to care for their families in war-torn areas with limited supplies of food, and rampant disease due to contaminated water. Pray for food and pure water sources for them.

Pray for Christians in countries that allow them to be mistreated, beaten, imprisoned and killed. Pray for women who are abused by their families because they have chosen to follow Christ.

Pray for revival in our country. Pray for a mighty convicting wind of God's Spirit to flow throughout our country, bringing people to their knees in search of the forgiveness that can only be found in Christ.

Pray for the elderly who are often in poor health, financially challenged and lonely. Pray for the church to reach out to them, sharing material as well as spiritual nourishment.

Baptist Building AT HOME DAYS, 9th-11th. Pray for Baptist Building leaders to seek God's will and discernment as they evaluate the year that is finishing and consider the upcoming year.

Churches in Iraq have been targeted by bombs; believers are afraid to meet there. Pray for courage.

Pray for the survivors in countries where there are massacres, ethnic cleansing, civil wars, etc. Pray for God's spirit to move throughout these countries and bring healing and peace.

Pray for ministries offering vocational skills training for parents in war-torn countries so that they can earn enough to provide for their families' basic needs.

(1) Baptist Building AT HOME DAYS, 6th-8th; (2) Legislative Prayer Breakfast, Baptist Building (CAC). Pray for our state legislators as they make decisions regarding our state.

Pray for fathers to be the spiritual leaders and protectors of their families. Pray that sons who have no father in their home to be sought out by Christian men who mentor them.

House church members risk arrest and imprisonment by Chinese officials every time they meet. Pray for God's protection.

Kailila's parents beat and ridiculed her for her Christian faith before kicking her out in Mauritania.

Children are forced into military service and pressured into killing, sometimes even killing their parents. Pray that they will be able to escape their captors, find safety and recover from their horrible memories.

Pray for the jobless in the USA during this time of economic crisis. Pray for open doors for them to find respectable ways to provide the basics for their children. Pray that they will seek the Lord in their time of need.

Pray for our pastors, many of whom are stretched to their limits. Pray that they will seek godly people in their churches to share in the responsibility of ministering to the needs of those in their church.

Pray that our churches would seek the truth of God through the Bible and not be deceived by "traditions" that are not scriptural.

Pray for believers in our Congress to seek God's will in their decisions on the various legislations they are called upon to consider. Pray for God to remind them of their accountability to Him as believers.

Hindu extremists attacked pastor Daniel inside his church in India. Pray for pastors.

Officials in Turkmenistan continue to falsely accuse Shagedy Atakoc to sway his faith in God. Pray that he is encouraged.

CHRISTMAS DAY
Thank God for His indescribable gift of Jesus Christ and salvation.

NEW YEAR'S DAY
January is MAKE YOUR WILL month. (MBF)

Recommit your heart to live this year in a way that will show others what God is really like.

(1) Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra Retreat, Madison, 8th-9th (CM). Pray for these musicians to sense God's anointing upon them as they play for His glory.

Pray for believers to seek ways that God would have them reach out to the lost. Pray that they would understand that God made them unique and may want them to reach out in ways He may not use others.

Muslim extremists attacked Christian families, burned 50 homes and killed livestock in Pakistan. Pray that families find peace.

Pray for a student team from Star Baptist Church as they travel to Costa Rica December 11-19. Pray for safety and for open doors to share the Gospel.

In Laos, village leaders kicked Nuaysay out of his home when he would not renounce his faith.

There are approximately 35 ongoing violent conflicts in the world today, resulting in millions of refugees and tens of millions of internally displaced persons worldwide. Pray for the gospel to reach them.

Ruth is a widow whose husband was killed in a religious riot in Nigeria. Pray for Nigerian widows.

Recommit your heart to live this year in a way that will show others what God is really like.

Pray for believers to seek ways that God would have them reach out to the lost. Pray that they would understand that God made them unique and may want them to reach out in ways He may not use others.

Christian women stepping out in Muslim Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (BP) — In the day she almost died, Betty (name changed for security reasons) began to live.

The young Indonesian Muslim woman was swimming in the river when three friends on shore fell in. They couldn't swim. Betty lunged toward them to help, but they dragged her under. Some people on the riverbank pulled one of the flailing non-swimmers to safety with a bamboo pole, but they couldn't reach Betty and the others.

As her lungs began to fill with water, Betty remembered everything she had learned during the previous few years about Jesus Christ and His promise of salvation.

"I thought I was going to die," she remembers. "At that moment I trusted Christ with my heart. I said, 'Lord, if I die, I will be with You in heaven, but if You want me to live, I will serve You for the rest of my life."

Somehow she fought her way to the surface. Rescuers pulled her to the riverbank. The other two people drowned.

Betty later was baptized and almost immediately became involved in church ministry. She found healing from the deep bitterness and anger she felt toward her Muslim father.

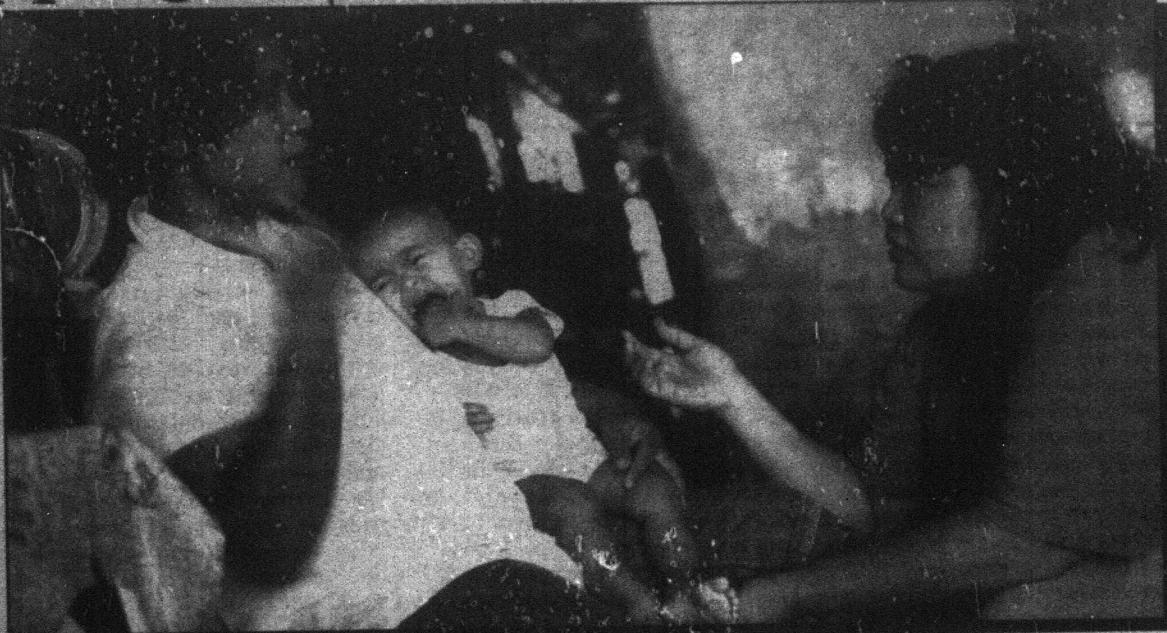
who had driven her away from home when she first began to seek spiritual truth.

As she experienced God's grace and forgiveness, she forgave her father. She also realized her spiritual calling as an evangelist.

"I thought about my two friends who drowned," she says. "I know the joy of the Lord. I will be with Him in heaven, but what about them? I got a real burden for people who don't know Christ. I began to reach out."

That's how she connected with Rick Arroyo (name changed for security reasons), a Southern Baptist strategy coordinator for Jakarta, Indonesia's huge capital. Rick was looking for Indonesian believers serious about taking the Gospel to the sprawling megacity, which is home to at least 12 million people.

"I met her at a pioneer evangelism seminar I taught at the small Baptist church she was a part of," Rick recalls. "I was 'fishing' for people to start a national team, and I was casting a vision. They were all young adults. I used those seminars as a weeding process to see who would stick it out. The group got smaller and smaller until we got our core people."



HELPING HAND — Betty (right, name changed for security reasons) reassures a mother with a sick child in Jakarta, Indonesia. One of the leaders of an Indonesian ministry team in the sprawling city, Betty has learned that some people respond to Christ quickly. For others, it's a process that might take years. (BP photo)

Betty was one of the first to commit to Rick's team. She gained the practical tools she needed to turn her calling into a daily practice of sharing the Gospel, primarily with Muslim and ethnic Chinese women. She learned that some respond to Christ quickly. For others, it's a process that might take years.

Now in her 30s, Betty is quick with a smile and a conversation. She's not timid, either. Her solid build suggests she could defend herself in a street fight if necessary. Her evangelistic travels around the city with her cell group members call for courage.

"They're not afraid to go anywhere," Rick says.

They travel by train, bus, or motorcycle, but they prefer the train. "No traffic jams, no red lights, and it's cheap," Betty explains.

On a recent trip, Betty and her team took the train from the main city station to several parts of Jakarta to share Gospel tracts and map new communities to return to later. At one stop, a thief snatched a

precious pendant from around Betty's neck and jumped out the open door of the train before it started rolling again. She'll miss the necklace, but it's all in a day's work.

Rhonda (name changed for security reasons), one of Betty's team members, describes their ministry this way: "I go all over Jakarta. I give out maybe 2,000 tracts a month. Sometimes I'm afraid, but I always go with someone, and I pray beforehand."

Betty also carries on running Gospel dialogues via text message with individuals to whom she has given a tract or a Bible and who are interested in learning more. "I'm very pleased with this book," one texter says. "Can I get more to give my friends?"

Other messages come from people who have never laid eyes

on her, including hard-core Islamists. Some want to debate and make threats. Some are sincerely looking for God.

Betty's base of ministry is her home, which is two rooms behind a small café she runs beside a busy road in Jakarta. A

large portrait of Jesus hangs in the front room. Many Indonesians have never seen an image of Him.

"A lot of people who come in ask, 'Who is that?'" she says, pointing to the portrait. "I tell them, 'That is my Father,' and

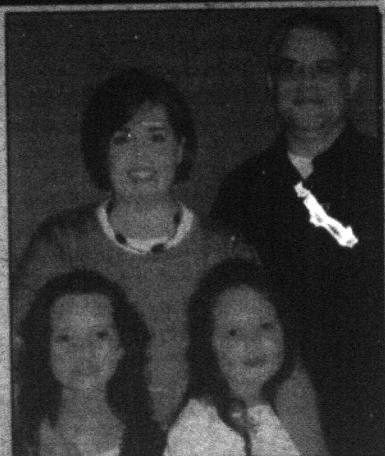
they ask, 'Is he passed away?' I say, 'He is in heaven.' I don't tell them who He is right away, but I use it as a way to share." Her regular café customers hear the Good News sooner or later as well.

Her cell group meets for worship and encouragement in the front room. Donning eyeglasses, Betty reads from the New Testament Book of Matthew, chapter 13, where Jesus teaches about the seeds of the Good News falling on good ground and bad. The six women in the group talk about spreading seeds in Jakarta. Then they sing and pray. Everyone contributes.

Each woman will one day lead her own cell group if she isn't already doing so. Rick visits when he can, to mentor the group. They also gather with other cells in larger "celebration" worship times for encouragement and teaching.

"God is using any woman who's interested in following Him," says Rick's wife Lucinda (name changed for security reasons).

STAFF CHANGES



1. The McMillans

1. First Church, Richton, has called Roland McMillan as pastor. He comes from Olive Church, Lumberton. He holds degrees from New Orleans Seminary and the University of South Alabama. He is shown with his wife and children Hannah and Sarah.
2. Friendship East Church, Charleston, has called Ben Kennedy as pastor. Shown are Kennedy, his wife, Angel, and children Kimberly and Caleb.



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First person: Will Christians travel this road again?

By Elaine Gaston
Correspondent

NORTH AFRICA (BP) — The truck we were traveling in through the Atlas Mountains rounded the curve of a hillside to reveal a meadow spreading below. As the sun burnished the field with its afternoon rays, an old Berber woman and girl tended a large flock of sheep.

We slowed the truck and then stopped, thinking we might photograph this pastoral scene.

We were traveling through Berber country, the mountainous home of the indigenous people of North Africa. An estimated 25 million Berbers live throughout the Maghreb ("place of sunset" in Arabic), the western region of North Africa. There are several major Berber groups, with distinctions determined in part by the geographical areas where they live and the languages they speak.

As we stood at the road's edge, the only sound we could hear was the plaintive cries of the sheep grazing below in the mountain pasture. No matter how we strained, we heard no distant rumble of traffic on a freeway, no jet crossing the sky, no sound of modern life.

To reach this place we had driven hours across plains and then up mountains, past cork oaks and Aleppo pines, and finally through forests of soaring cedars at higher altitudes.

Up here there were no electrical lines, no gas stations, no paved roads — just mountains,

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, is hosting a Real Evangelism conference Feb. 10 - 12, 2010. Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Frank Cox, Bailey Smith and Greater Vision; Thursday, 10:00 a.m., Harold Mathena & Bill Sturm; 1:45 p.m., Jerry Chaddick & Bob Pitman; 6:30 p.m., Jerry Chaddick, Junior Hill and Mike Speck Trio; Friday, 10:00 a.m., Bunny Martin & Rick Coram; 1:30 p.m., Kara Blackard & Bob Pitman; 6:30 p.m., Jerry Vines and the McKameys.

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forests, and simple Berber homes with smoke wisping out of stone chimneys. Here and there, a solitary shepherd watching a flock of sheep.

Difficulty of access is one of the obstacles to reaching Berbers with the Gospel. While they can be found in cosmopolitan cities of North Africa as shopkeepers, restaurant workers and professionals, vast numbers live in remote mountain villages that are difficult to reach — making bad roads, or no roads, a barrier.

So there, at this road's edge, we decided to make our way down to the two figures standing below. Because I was the only woman in our group, I went first, not sure if they would welcome our intrusion. Slipping and sliding in slick-bottomed leather sandals, I stumbled down the hill.

They stared as I approached. Knowing they wouldn't understand me, I spoke in English anyway, hoping the warmth of my words would communicate friendliness. The old woman watched me curiously, then greeted me with a pleasant smile, her four upper front teeth missing from her grin. The girl shyly approached and smiled as well.

How odd we must have seemed to them. We wanted to take pictures of the sheep and of them. It was the golden hour for a photographer, that time of day when rich light suffuses scenes, bringing warmth and beauty to images that in other light might have gone unnoticed.

The sun glinted off the wool of the sheep as they cropped the dry grass and brought vivid colors from the girl's bright eyes and glowing complexion. The woman and girl laughed with us, or perhaps at us.

Even with our translator, we could communicate little with them, except by gestures and expressions. Our translator spoke Arabic, the official language of the North African countries, but the mother, who looked years beyond her actual age, spoke only the local Berber language.

Lack of literacy is another issue in bringing the Gospel to the Berbers. Many, especially those in rural areas, must be reached orally through hearing the Gospel. Printed materials have limited

usefulness with such an audience. Additionally, not one of the several Berber languages spoken in North Africa has a complete Bible in that language.

Called Berbers by the rest of the world, these people call themselves *Imazighen*, which means "free men." They are, however, anything but free. Since the seventh century, when Arab invaders brought Islam along with their domination of these lands and peoples, the Berbers have been cloaked by centuries of spiritual oppression.

"To be North African is to be Muslim" is the common saying here, and in these Muslim countries, Christian proselytizing is forbidden by law.

We shot more photos of the flock, some of the weathered



BOUNTIFUL HARVEST — A Berber vendor sells dried fruit and nuts in an evening market square. Rural market towns across North Africa are important gathering places as men converge there to buy supplies and sell crops or livestock. Worker Keith Jones (name changed for security reasons) often stops by to strike up conversations with shopkeepers, practicing the Berber language and sharing Gospel truths. (BP photo)

mother who tried her best to smile with her mouth closed to cover her missing teeth, and some of the radiant girl. I was frustrated that I didn't know a single phrase in her Berber language that could communicate to her a word of eternal value.

I'm frustrated now, remembering how we'd driven that far and exchanged smiles and moments together with this family, but the girl, her mother, her brothers may never meet another believer unless someone else takes that long, isolated road and stumbles down that hillside. Who is going to take that road and look for them?

We had to get back on the road; it was close to sunset and the journey before us was uncertain. We left the family a

gift of cookies and tea. We said goodbyes and I squeezed the girl's hand, but my heart ached as we climbed up the hillside to the truck.

We paused again at the edge of the road, waving down at the now four small figures. They stood together, watching us, and waved with arms high over their heads. We started the truck engine and I looked back out the rear window as they got smaller and smaller.

Finally, we swung around a curve in the road and they were gone.

Gaston is a freelance writer who reports on people groups in Central Asia and North Africa for the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Micah 5:1-5a; 7:18-20

By Barbara Brown

The strains of Christmas music are everywhere - a mix of old favorites along with the new. This menagerie of holiday music seems to reflect the day in which we live - a secular world with a dash of the spiritual reminders of what Christmas is supposed to be. In the midst of the music there may arise one Christmas hymn which hints of the struggles of God's people and their need for deliverance. This hymn, "Come, Thou Long-Expected Savior," was written in 1744 by John Wesley:

Come, Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free;

From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's Strength and Consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art;



Dear Desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Brown

Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King, Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring. By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; By Thine all sufficient merit, raise us to Thy glorious throne.

At first glance, this hymn appears to lack the usual merriment, hopeful wonder, and joy associated with Christmas songs. But look again and find embedded in this tune a reminder of the only hope which brings ultimate peace.

Micah used similar thoughts and words as he warned the wicked people of his day of impending punishment and ruin. He then reminded them of the future

that would be theirs in a Messiah yet to come.

The Warning

The book of Micah relates the story of God's people lost in a world of sin and destruction. It reads very much like today's headline news: wicked rulers, abuse of authority, evil schemes, prostitution, deceitful merchants, intellectual arrogance, political ambition, spiritual compromise, and indifference towards the poor and downtrodden. The enemy was all around, but they lacked the discernment to recognize it.

So God raised up Micah. Micah was God's instrument, His mouthpiece of warning. The Lord wanted His people to know that their wickedness was about to bring destruction. They were about to be "handed over to their enemies." (5:3) They could anticipate losing their land and all they had built. They had forgotten the goodness of God in their lives and the covenant they, not so long before, had made with Him to be His people while He would be their One and Only God.

Their arrogant forgetfulness would lead to certain doom.

God's goal through Micah was not only one of pronouncing judgment on His people, but ultimately, He wanted His people to wake up, come to their senses, and grasp the reality of their lostness and need for true repentance. So, in the midst of the warning, Micah pronounced the hope of salvation.

A Future Hope

The God who had led their forefathers out of bondage and into freedom, provided for each need and placed them in the land He had promised; that same God had a great plan - one of hope, deliverance, and peace.

The great hope would come from a small unnoticed, dusty, unpretentious hamlet named Bethlehem. (5:2) Micah says that from this unimportant town would come a Ruler with a firm hand and the heart of a Shepherd - One Who would bring unprecedented peace. (5:4-5a)

Micah tells the people that the God who made them will not stay angry with them, but will offer them forgiveness and love. (7:18-19) He proclaims to them that the Lord will keep

His covenant with His people (7:20) and that He would do it by sending a Savior - the long-awaited Messiah.

A Savior for Today

It does not stretch the imagination to see the wretchedness of our world today mirrored in the life and times of Micah. But, as Matthew Henry says in his Concise Commentary of the Bible, "When we complain to the Lord about the badness of the times, we ought to complain against ourselves for the badness of our hearts. We must depend upon God to work deliverance for us in due time. We must not only look to Him, but for Him... Though our enemies may seem to prevail against us, and to rejoice over us, we should not despond. Though cast down, we are not destroyed; we may join hope in God's mercy."

And that hope is wrapped up in the Savior Who was born to set His people free and give them peace. May He be the joy and desire of your heart this Christmas.

Brown is children's minister, Colonial Heights Church, Ridgeland.

fused and there is much arguing. They don't know what to make of the new teaching, the authoritative words, or His rule over dark spirits. People are divided, but word of these exploits spread quickly and that night His front door is crowded by the sick and possessed of the town. You watch as He heals many and shuts the mouths of demons. As you walk home you realize you are unaware of the troubles and stresses of the day. They have been melted by what you have seen, heard, and experienced.

Okay, now come back to the 21st century. You can still be taken away by Him. If you focus on Him all the stresses and uncertainty of our own time fades. You see, the message of the Kingdom is still going out, His words still have ultimate authority and relevance, and His Spirit is alive and well moving in the hearts and lives of believers. The darkness is still vanquished by the Light.

Woody is a member of Broadmoor Church, Madison.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

How can Jesus Help Me?

Mark 1:14-31



Woody

By Malcolm Woody

Let's go back in time. Set aside the troubles and stresses of our own day and consider the same of first century Palestine. Imagine you live there along the shore of the Sea of Galilee in the bustling fishing village of Capernaum. Times are tough and desperate.

The Romans have occupied your land for years and rule with a heavy fist. Any sign of insurrection is met with fierce and violent measures. You have a king of sorts, but everyone knows that Herod Antipas is merely a puppet put in power by the Romans to placate those who from the times of the prophet Samuel had desired to have a king. What is worse, Herod is more corrupt and vile than even the Romans. You are fatigued daily by taxation from tax col-

lectors who tax your every move and possession. Some are fair, but most are not as there are no regulations beyond what Rome requires. Since there appears to be no way to get ahead outside of joining in the corruption, most folks just live day to day as best they can doing more surviving than thriving.

Into this time comes a prophet, who is the son of a prominent priest. He is preaching in the Judean wilderness and you are encouraged by this news. God has not sent a prophet in nearly 400 years and now everyone is talking about this man living in the desert. Even the Jewish authorities are questioning him to see if, possibly, he is the Messiah. You know the time is right and you allow yourself to dream

The Kingdom of God? Could it be? Is He the one?

of the days of David and a return to glory, a time when silver was as common as pebbles along the road. People go to the fiery wilderness prophet in droves and you decide to see for yourself. You discover that the prophet proclaims he is making the way for the Messiah. He urges repentance and baptizes with water. You consent to be baptized by this man named John and you prepare yourself for the days to come with great expectation.

Unfortunately however, Herod imprisons the prophet John and your expectations are shaken. Quickly, though another man arrives on the scene. He is Jesus from the tiny outpost of Nazareth. He comes near your hometown proclaiming, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe in the good news!" (Mk 1:15 HCSB)

"Be quiet and come out of him!" (Mk. 1:25 HCSB), Jesus sternly replies and the man shakes sadly as the evil spirit complies. All who see are amazed. Some are con-

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

THE BAPTIST Record

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

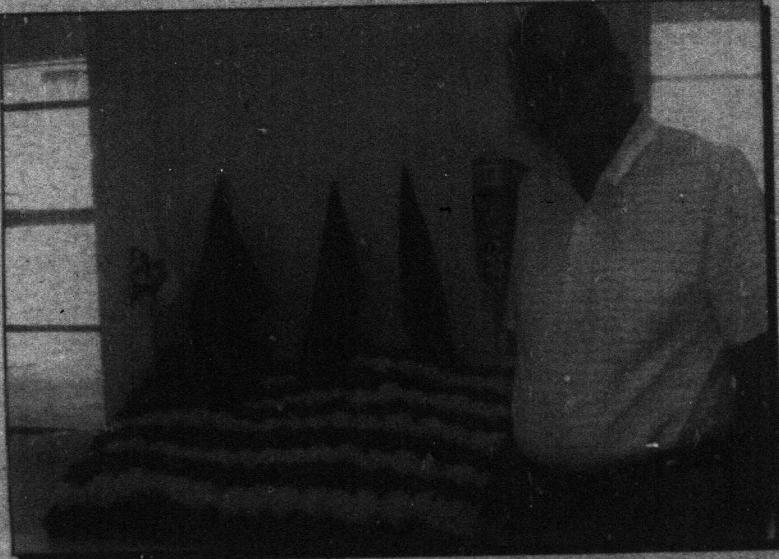
Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



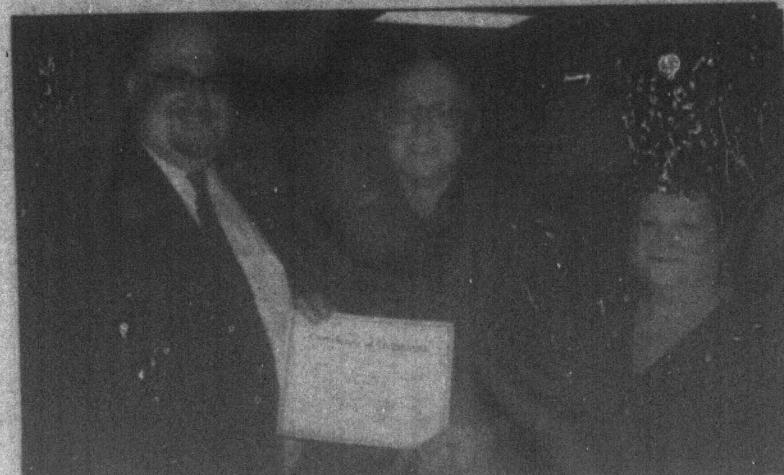
5. Rocky Point Church, Leake



6. Eckman, Navilla Church, McComb



7. Loop Road Church, Richton



8. Hebron Church, Grenada

1. Leflore Church will host their annual Brunswick stew meal Dec. 5, in the parking lot next to the Blockbuster in Grenada, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Cost, \$5/quart, with proceeds going toward the church's building fund.

2. First Church, Terry, recently exceeded its Margaret Lackey State Missions offering goal of \$2,250 by collecting \$2,958.65.

3. New Zion Church, Braxton, recognized pastor Bruce Jolly in October during pastor appreciation month with a movie night, presents, a luncheon "roast", a peanut boil, and monetary gifts.

4. The South 28th Ave. Church choir, Hattiesburg, will present An Old Fashioned Christmas Dec. 13, 11 a.m.

5. Rocky Point Church, Leake, recognized veterans Josie Schmidt, Inez Miller, Wilton Camp, and Wade Lovorn Nov. 8. The veterans are shown with pastor Marshall Lum.

6. Charles Eckman, Navilla Church, McComb, is shown in front of a patriotic arrangement he presented to the church during the Veteran's Day service. Eckman is a retired Marine.

7. Loop Road Church, Richton, broke ground on its new fellowship hall Nov. 22. Shown are pastor Rory Dill, Pug Malone, Tracy Malone, Dan Jones, Danny Newell, Danny Griffith and Sonny Freeman.

8. Hebron Church, Grenada, ordained Gary Bennett as deacon Dec. 22. Shown are pastor Greg Collins, Bennett, and Karen Bennett.

9. Trinity Church, Philadelphia, recognized Judy Bates for her work weekly with the food assistance ministry of Neshoba County Association. Shown are Tarra Paden, Bates, Janice Harrison, Helen Clemons.

10. First Church, Mendenhall, recently broke ground on their new family life center. Shown is the building committee with architect Gary Cahill, Rodney Anderson, pastor.

11. The widows of River Bend Church, Aberdeen, were honored with a luncheon at the church Nov. 12. Shown are the participants.

12. Calvary Church, Columbia, ordained Billy Berry as dea-



9. Bates, Trinity Church, Philadelphia



10. First Church, Mendenhall



11. River Bend Church, Aberdeen



12. Berry ordination, Calvary Church, Columbia

con Nov. 29. Shown are Brenda Berry, Berry, and pastor Millard Moak.

13. Candy Lee and Camea Dobbs, daughters of Mississippi pastor Kevin Dobbs, will be in concert at

2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on December 5 at the Belhaven College Center for the Arts in Jackson. Special guest will be comedian Jeremy Rangle. For tickets and information, call (601) 824-9424.